



Oliver Johnson,

Office of the Christian Union,

New York City.

April 5, 1855



LS 13 I congratulate you on having gone  
through such a terribly severe winter without  
a serious drawback on to health. I am still  
simplifying.

Roxbury, April 9, 1873.

Dear Johnson:

The postman has just brought me  
your letter of yesterday.

I can easily imagine how numer-  
ous must be the contributions to the Chris-  
tian Union, and therefore how necessary it  
is, as a general rule, that they should be  
short. I feel greatly obliged that an ex-  
ceptional case has been made in publish-  
ing my tribute to the character and la-  
bors of our departed co-workers in the  
broad field of reform, James Hough-  
ton and Richard D. Webb. I tried to  
condense it as much as possible, and yet  
not fail to do them something like justice;  
for the eminent service they rendered us  
Americans in the sublime conflict to  
deliver our country from its terrible curse  
deserves to be both honorably and grate-  
fully recorded. And I earnestly desired,

in such a connection, that the noble conduct of O'Connell should be remembered in refusing to be silent on the subject of American slavery, let the consequences to ~~the~~ Ireland and the Repeal movement be what they might. It alone should suffice to immortalize his memory; and a fresh reminder of it may help to soften the prejudices of our Irish citizens towards our colored population, and serve to strengthen the personal integrity of our public men. Be assured, therefore, that it has not been in my mind to make my article the measure of any other that I may write for the Christian Union. Indeed, I should have sent it to the Independent, had it not been that I had already forwarded <sup>another</sup> ~~my article~~ on Woman Suffrage to that journal; and I wished to have "In Memoriam" published more promptly than it probably would have been; if sent in that direction.

Take your own time for publishing the Sonnets; but I should like to have them printed all together. In the one commencing,

"Human Infallibility, avaunt!"  
you may substitute "Priestly" for "Human," if you ~~like~~<sup>prefer</sup> the alteration. In using the latter word, my thought was to make the impiety of any human being, assuming to be infallible, revolting to common sense and true reverence, no matter what might be his religious faith. It is true, only the Romish Pope boldly makes this claim before Christendom; but, alas! there is much of the Papal spirit permeating our Protestantism, and assuming as freely to "deal damnation around the land," for theological differences of opinion, as though it were the act of God himself. This is virtually putting on the robes of infallibility, and treating free thought, free inquiry,

free speech, individual non-conformity,  
and the right of private judgment as  
offences in the sight of Heaven! There  
are many of our self-styled "Evangelical"  
clergy who are as bigoted, proscriptive,  
and self-inflated as the Pope himself,  
and <sup>who</sup> deserve to have no quarters given  
them, inasmuch as they are recreant to  
the fundamental doctrine of the Re-  
formation in the matter of each soul  
determining for itself what its religious  
faith shall be. They do not like to be  
charged with priestcraft, and disclaim  
being priests; and so, when these terms are  
used, they give them a strictly Romish  
application. Still, I would like your  
choice as between "Priestly" and "Human  
Infallibility" in the Sonnet referred to.

I am glad Emily Faithfull was  
accorded so handsome a reception in  
New York: she deserved it.

Yours to the end, W. L. G.